

opinion/editorial

Tenth floor window no problem—solver, people may be

Often it's a matter of priorities. Often these priorities are foisted upon the student by the parents. It's a rather sad commentary on the American drive to succeed that some students choose death over failure. Failure can often be the greatest teacher. Death doesn't teach anything, except possibly, the high value of life.

One must have a sane, sensible perspective in a world of grade point averages, long hours, high tuitions, a high degree of academic competition and a tight job market. There are great pressures put upon students in this situation and it isn't surprising

that some of them crack under it.

The key to surviving the academic jungle is the ability to sit back occasionally despite the deadlines and pressures and take a calm, slow look at the whole picture. Often, when totally involved in this kind of frantic, day-to-day battle called higher education, it's hard to see the forest for the trees.

If, in order to sit back, it is necessary to seek professional help, there's no shame in it. Everyone needs help from time to time and there's absolutely nothing wrong with asking for it. Believe it or not there are

actually people whose job it is to help others.

A view of this kind of help shared by many, is that other people sometimes need it but not you or me. What we tend to forget is that we are all you's and me's.

If you are in the throes of an end-of-the-semester panic, if you're afraid Dad's going to disown you if your GPA drops below 3.5, if you think the open window in your tenth-floor room looks more inviting than going home for Christmas, you've lost the proper perspective. It's time to sit back and take a

breather—and perhaps get some help. On this campus there's help at the Health Center and any of the campus ministries. Help rarely killed anyone. Lack of it seems to be doing a pretty good job.

Psychologists tell us that college and university students figure prominently in suicide statistics.

Furthermore, they say, this is the time of year when these students make that fatal decision. It seems to be a combination of fear of failure, academic pressures, peer pressures and loneliness in the face of a holiday season away from home.

New York Times is knocked down a notch 'for fun'

It hit the stands on Monday, Oct. 23 in the middle of a strike which closed New York's three major daily newspapers.

It looked strangely similar to the nation's leading newspaper, the type was the same, the layout looked so real.

But something was wrong. The famous motto had changed from "all the news that is fit to print" to "all the news not fit to print."

The price went up from 20 to 95 cents. And the flag contained an extra word. It was "Not the New York Times."

usage of cocaine.

Unfortunately, the new paper was inflated as only one issue reached newsstands.

Actually, the *Not the New York Times* was a gift by New York's literary crowd to those in the world who missed their *Times* as the newspaper strike dragged on.

It also is an excellent satire on the hand that feeds America's news.

A copy of the infamous gazette found its way into my mailbox last week and provided hours of entertainment as Tom Wicker became Tom Wacker and wrote about the ERA, James Rest gave us a report from Asia Minor and Dead Smith wrote about the Knicks and Rangers.

This sort of satire is healthy and fun and is practiced by this newspaper on occasion.

When it is done by people like Carl

Bernstein, Nora Ephron and P. J. O'Rourke it reaches its highest and/or lowest level.

No message

There is no great social message in the *Not the New York Times*, and it has no purpose except to entertain and perhaps to knock *The New York Times* down a notch or two.

There are plans in the works to market the paper nationally so it may appear in bookstores or copies can be found floating around.

Last week, the Supreme Court denied certiorari to Myron Farber and the *New York Times* in their appeal of contempt convictions from New Jersey.

In refusing to hear the case, the court

stood by its earlier decision in the Branzburg case which said a constitutionally protected newsman's privilege does not exist.

This in itself is not troubling, as the press has been working under Branzburg. The problem with the Farber case is that it involves a part of the Branzburg decision which said states can establish shield laws to protect reporters from being forced to reveal their sources.

New Jersey has such a law and it was a key part of Farber's defense, but the court refused to hear the case, seemingly justifying judicial ignorance of shield laws across the nation.

It was unfortunate the court did not choose to hear the case. We can only hope it will change its mind on later appeals.

I. kent wolgamott

The only edition of the paper led with a story headlined "Pope Dies Yet Again; Reign Is Briefest Ever, Cardinals Return From Airport."

Not the *New York Times* correspondent R. W. Papple, Jr. wrote from Rome that Pope John Paul John Paul I died while administering the Papal benediction, only serving 19 minutes as Pope, the briefest reign ever.

Stretched stories

Other page one stories included the collapse of the Queensboro Bridge during a marathon because of too many runners; the confusion of New York's social season as chic disco Studio 54 burned to the ground and a dispatch from San Francisco accompanied by a nose chart on the rising



Parents who give up children to adoption fight for rights

Washington—The whole time I was talking with Virginia, I was thinking about Cynthia. Not that you would see any similarities on the surface.

Virginia, 43 and white, has a good job with the government, lives with her husband in a good home in a prestigious neighborhood. She appears to be doing okay.

Cynthia, 20, black and unmarried, was barely a certified adult when I spoke with her a year and a half ago. She and her three children were living on \$314 a month in public assistance.

What Cynthia and Virginia have in common is their dismay at the public attitude toward people who surrender their children for adoption. They want the rules changed.

When I met her, Cynthia was trying to find a lawyer to help her locate her first child—a daughter who would be seven now—who had been placed for adoption.

Principle her concern

Virginia is more concerned with the principle than the practical effect of the law, having on her own, located all four of her children after a search of just a few months.

"When I talk about the rights of birthparents," she told me, "you may get the impression that I was 14 or 15 when I surrendered my baby to a better way of life. That's not true. I was a grown, married woman when I surrendered four children, aged 4 months to 5 years, when their father deserted us."

She acknowledges that she had

profound problems at the time, emotional and psychological as well as financial, and she had little choice but to place her children in foster care.

Adoptions coerced

But it was never her idea to have them placed permanently for adoption, she said. She was coerced into that after a year of "horrendous pressures from a variety of social workers."

william raspberry

Prior to the adoption, she said, she was able, through social workers, to see her children, either at their foster homes or at the welfare agency. After the adoptions were final, they wouldn't even tell her where they were or how they were doing, she said.

As the surrendering mother, she said, she discovered she had no rights whatsoever. She doesn't think that's right.

Outrage leads to club

And although she has since established contact with her children, and they with each other, her outrage over what happened to her has led Virginia to join an organization called Concerned United Birthparents, Inc. (CUB), of which she is Washington coordinator. (The national headquarters is in Milford, Me., P.O. Box 573, 01757.)

"There is a big controversy over opening court records, as more and more adopted

people are looking for their roots, their heritage, their identity, while at the same time, some 10 million birthparents don't know the whereabouts of their own children," she said.

"An awful lot of us are finding each other, but others will never know if their children are dead or alive. (The authorities) keep coming back to the position that we birthparents need to be protected. But why do I need protection? I've committed no crime. I've given love and life.

Real purpose punishment

"No, it's not our protection they are interested in. The only explanation that makes sense is that they want to punish us."

Well, not quite the only explanation. It is no doubt true that a lot of birthparents—particularly adolescent or college-age mothers—would opt for a abortion rather than place their infants for adoption if they thought there was any chance that their children might turn up unexpectedly to disrupt their lives.

The adoption laws are designed to protect these parents.

In addition, there must be a large number of adoptive parents who would have second thoughts if they had been required to make their names and whereabouts known to the natural parents. The laws are designed to protect them as well.

No protection needed

Virginia says no such protection is

needed. All she ever wanted, she said, was to get to know her children and to see that they were doing okay. In any case, they are all adults now.

But suppose they still were children and suppose, in Virginia's opinion, they weren't doing okay. Could she avoid taking the next step: trying to get her children back?

Virginia wants the law changed so that either the natural parents or their grownup children could get the court records of adoption unsealed.

While the 500 members of CUB might agree with that, there must be thousands of settled women who would be aghast at the prospect that their long-suppressed secrets might be exposed at some terribly inopportune time.

Veto rights

One possible approach would be to give each party to adoption—the natural parents, the adoptive parents and the child—veto rights as to whether the court records will be opened, with the court itself acting as intermediary.

Virginia won't buy that one. She believes that adult children and their birthparents have a right to know about each other.

And if someone else's life is disrupted in the process? "Tough," she says.

Cynthia couldn't have said it better.

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